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ABSTRACT

Two learning activities (one involving a craft and the other radio programs) provided in two elementary classes taught by a community volunteer are described, and related material for implementing the activities in other classrooms is provided. The lessons were taught in a regularly scheduled activity period entitled "Children's Choice;" interested community members were invited to share their knowledge and/or skills with students who attended the class. Through careful planning and preparation, an inexperienced volunteer conducted a successful crafts activity in which children made plant hangers with strands of yarn. The second activity consisted of giving children a chance to listen to and discuss two "Fibber Magee and Molly" programs broadcast originally during 1947-1948. The belief is expressed that there is great academic and social value in the study of transcriptions of some of the old radio comedy programs made during "the golden age of radio" (from the 1920s through the 1950s). Radio buffs who are potential resources for classroom teachers can probably be found in every city and several large collections of radio programs exist. Appendices provide instructions on how to make plant hangers, lists of sources of radio program recordings and tapes, and a brief annotated bibliography of books on radio comedy programs. (Author/RH)

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COMMUNITY IN THE SCHOOLS--
TO TEACH A CRAFT AND STUDY OLDTIME RADIO HUMOR

By

Folly Liss

August 1981

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COMMUNITY IN THE SCHOOLS--
TO TEACH A CRAFT AND STUDY OLDTIME RADIO HUMOR

By Polly Liss

INTRODUCTION

"Community resources can serve education in a variety of ways. They can provide a stimulus for learning at all levels." This is a conclusion of the Arts, Education and Americans Panel in its report several years ago entitled, Coming to our senses. In fact, going a step further, the former U.S. Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel, has been quoted as saying, "Education is much too important to be left to the educators." He made this statement in encouraging traditional educators to form alliances with institutions and citizens of their communities in designing and providing various aspects of youngsters' education.

Jerome J. Hausman's Arts and the Schools states that "Many persons in the community, other than professional educators can and should be enlisted as 'teachers' for certain kinds of learning experiences." The book goes on to say, "Although these concepts [community involvement with the schools] may seem to be the common assumptions of a considerable body of educational thought today, their application as an accepted fundamental of educational practice has, so far, been limited to a relatively modest number of school systems throughout the country. But the ideas are being tested and more productive partnerships are being forged, because both partners now seem to sense that the times--and young people themselves--demand it."

"CHILDREN'S CHOICE"

To involve members of the community was a definite objective of the elementary school attended by my youngest child around four years ago in a northern Virginia school district. In addition to other contacts with the community, the school had an established activity period which staff had titled, "Children's Choice." It was a 90-minute period of time, broken into two 45-minute sessions, and held once each week. Members of the community (some of whom were parents of children in the school) were invited to share their knowledge and/or skills with the students for one or both of the 45-minute sessions, with a limit of 10 students in attendance for the activity. Everyone who accepts such an invitation becomes a teacher, for that moment, with a most eager class comprised only of those students who ask to be there.

It is the purpose of this paper to discuss two separate occasions during which I participated in the Children's Choice sessions, and why I think these activities are meaningful in the education process. I shall dwell more on the second experience as the ramifications of this activity are potentially more pervasive for educational purposes.

TEACHING A CRAFT

The first occasion for participation occurred when my daughter volunteered me to teach the making of macrame plant hangers. I had tutored foreign languages on a 1:1 basis and occasionally I had been asked to address a class about some

specific topic such as, "The Story of Chanukah" or "The Importance of Career Skills in the Work of a Community Volunteer," but I had never before taught a craft to anyone. In fact, I had just learned this skill and hadn't yet gotten over the fact that I had successfully created something with my own hands that was both useful and decorative. Perhaps because I had so recently learned this art, what was important to me in the learning process was fresh enough in my mind to make the learning experience easy for someone else.

It was up to me to decide whether I needed a single 90-minute time frame or two 45-minute sessions, with different students in each session. I chose the latter. This decision, because of the shorter time frame, meant that I had a longer preparation for each session. The school repaid me for all of the craft materials, which at that time, purchased on sale, amounted to $0.65 per student.

The most tedious and time-consuming step in the making of the plant hangers was the first step, which required the cutting of 36 strands of yarn, each 3½ yards long, and keeping them untangled. This was the process I did at home alone and only demonstrated it briefly for the students.

At the sessions, I handed each student a paper bag containing the pre-cut strands of yarn (purchased for $0.50 a skein in a "5 & 10¢ store") and a metal ring (key ring purchased for $0.15 in a hardware store). The students went through each of the remaining steps together to finish making the plant hangers. (The instructions for this craft are in Appendix A.)

Each group of students (ten in a group) progressed at about the same rate. Only two students were unable to finish in the time frame in which we worked. Most of the students were male, all were in the fifth or sixth grade, and all were most enthusiastic. They had a great sense of accomplishment and many indicated that they would continue to make the plant hangers and use them as gifts for family and friends (this was shortly before Christmas).

In retrospect, I think my decision to do the first step at home was a good one, as long as I had the time to do so, for two reasons:

1. The separating, cutting, and keeping untangled, strands of yarn of such numbers and length would have been very difficult for students working on the project for the first time in such a limited time frame.

2. Having the step explained and demonstrated but not having to go through the process, eliminated the one potentially negative aspect of the procedure. It also enabled each student to understand and have the knowledge or experience to complete the entire task alone.

Each student had a product to show and keep, even the two not quite finished, and each knew that that product was the result of his or her own effort. The instructions given, both orally and on paper, apparently were adequate; and the students could see the importance of following the instructions to attain a product pleasing to themselves. They did so cheerfully. We

all had fun. In part, the pleasure was derived from the fact that I was not their regular teacher. I find the same respect and acceptance from my own children when a newcomer or someone outside the family shares something with them or tells them how to do something.

I had learned the craft in a workshop given by my neighborhood Extension Homemakers' Club. There are many such groups in every community willing to accept invitations from the schools to share their expertise with students at all age levels. I would suggest contacting the local Cooperative Extension Service, garden clubs, women's clubs, businesses involving specific skills. Each locale has its own rich resources for community participation.

ENRICHMENT THROUGH STUDY OF HUMOR OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

The next opportunity I had to participate in Children's Choice, I played a tape of two Fibber Magee and Molly programs broadcast originally during 1947-48. I had made the tape from a rebroadcast a year or two before. A different episode was used in each session.

This was a most interesting activity. Most of the students elected the sessions because they had heard parents or grandparents talk about the "Golden Age of Radio," and they wanted to hear for themselves how the celebrated comedians of bygone years sounded.

In each session we played the tape (no commercials were included); discussed briefly the expressions, names, and vocabulary that were unfamiliar to the students; then replayed

the tape. The understanding and appreciation of the humor improved considerably on the second playing of the tape.

I concluded that humor exists primarily when the context of the references made in jest fall within the realm of the audience's experience or knowledge. Consequently, except for "timeless humor," what is funny for one generation of listeners is not necessarily funny for a succeeding generation--unless that generation familiarizes itself with the values, culture, and history of the period which serves as the background for the humorous episode.

Extending from my experience with Children's Choice, I think there is great academic and social value in the study of transcriptions of some of the old radio comedy programs of the 1920's to the 1950's--The Golden Age of Radio. To illustrate this point, the following were terms, names, and concepts in the two episodes of the Fibber Magee and Molly program which the students indicated they needed to understand in order to grasp and enjoy the humor:

1. President Truman and a piano tuner--what connection could there be?

2. Reference to Rover Boys and Five Little Peppers and How They Grew as highlights in the Magee library--why is that funny?

3. Robert Ripley--who was he?

4. Louis-Mauriello fight--who were they?

5. Bastille--what was it?

6. Why were all of the telephone calls made through an operator instead of by dialing?

7. "Color of a bookkeeper's eyeshade"--what is an eyeshade and what is its color?

8. "Panatella picnic"--what is a Panatella?

9. Why is "Doc Gamble" a funny name for a doctor? What about "Mayor La Trivia?"

10. "Brewery horse"--what kind of horse is that?

11. Why did they use an alarm clock to mark half-hour intervals?

12. "Meat shortage"--what was that about?

13. "Grass"--did you think first of drugs?

14. Sugar as a high-priced commodity--why?

15. Tobacco Road--what was that?

16. What is the meaning of the following terms and expressions:

shake-down artist	fraught with something
equitation	jodhpurs
placebo	whims
bustle	chronic

In one episode, there was an interesting discussion of honesty in regard to the Magees' friend, Mr. Boomer, who left a suitcase in their care temporarily. It would have been an interesting topic to pursue, had there been time, just in examining Molly's remark in regard to wanting to find out what was in the suitcase: "It's one thing to have it open accidentally but quite another thing if we break into it." Also, points of law came up in the conversation such as the rights of a person

with a prison record to press charges against someone for forced access to a possession.

English teachers would delight in discussions of the syntax of various parts of the scripts, such as:

1. Fibber Magee: "Imagine me being took sick."

2. Visiting hairdresser: "It's just I," followed by, "I and her got so much to talk about," and finally to the ailing Magee, "I hope you get well!"

3. Eight-year-old Sis saying "glid" for glided, "rided" for rode, "hode" for hid, "div" for dove, "arrove" for arrived, and "drivved up the droveway" for drove up the driveway.

The Golden Age of Radio can live again in the classroom

In every city there are numerous buffs of the Golden Age of Radio. They are found in radio stations, theaters, museums, and among the public at large. It takes a little digging to find them, but I daresay that most would be delighted to share memories, recordings, and tapes. Teachers (either professional or nonprofessional) can capitalize on these experiences for students by preparing in advance a vocabulary of unfamiliar terms and names and by following through after the session with a discussion of the values, the culture, the important trends and influences of the period. With some research, comedies can even be selected for their special relevance to history, sociology, science, spelling, grammar, etc.

It will be a revelation to some students that human nature is more constant than they realized. They may well be surprised

to find they identify easily with such stories as the one told by Ed Wynn in 1933 (cited in Arthur Frank Wertheim's book, Radio Comedy) about a father who told his son to write an essay on milk:

"The father says, 'you still have to write a ten page essay on milk.' And the boy said 'I'm too tired Papa, I'm only going to write one page on milk.' The father says: 'How can you do that?' He says, 'well, I'm making it condensed milk.'"

The Importance of radio and comedy during the Golden Age of Radio

Wertheim, in Radio Comedy, said, "Radios, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and automobiles were among the many new consumer items Americans purchased on credit in the 1920's. Like the automobile, radio lessened the isolation of farms and small towns."

A testament to the importance of radio is found in Erik Barnouw's, The Golden Web: "The stale formulas of every field of entertainment were being tried on radio, and many were succeeding in winning audiences and, to an astonishing degree, boosting sales, particularly of drugs and packaged foods. Meanwhile they were winning for radio a loyalty that seemed almost irrational. According to social workers, destitute families that had to give up an icebox or furniture or bedding still clung to the radio as to a last link with humanity."

In prefatory remarks to a collection of scripts by some of the best performers at the height of their popularity in radio, Ross Firestone, in his book, The Big Radio Comedy Programs, explains that by the early 1930s "the comedians had arrived in

force and were beginning to dominate the medium. . . . And once they came, most of them stayed, taking over the prime evening hours with their shows. For all the notorious fickleness of public taste, the top radio comedians had extraordinary longevity. As Erik Barnouw tells us in his History of Broadcasting in the United States, 'The cluster of comedians heading the ratings remained remarkably constant. They seemed to cut across age groups and socio-economic strata. They provided universal therapy.' Such therapy continued past the Depression and into World War II and the postwar years. The comedy only faded in the 1950s, when it was lured over to the newly emergent medium of television. Then, once again, radio returned to the music with which it began."

A study of life in the United States during the 1920's to the 1950's can not only be better understood by examining the radio comedy of that era, but can certainly be digested in a most palatable manner.

How did the recordings survive?

According to Carl Scheele, Curator, Division of Community Life, Smithsonian Institution, transcriptions of the old programs were made in various ways:

1. In the studio during the broadcast--for later network use or just for the record of what was actually said.

2. Recorded at regular broadcast time from telephone lines at receivor stations for later use to avoid conflict with local or national events such as baseball games and election results.

3. Recordings directly from the radio speaker at the time of broadcast.

Many of the recordings found today fall in the latter category and are probably illegal. Considered "pirated copies" or "bootlegged," they are sold without appropriate clearance from networks, artists, or surviving families of artists.

Probably the largest collections lie dormant in network libraries.

Where can recordings be found locally?

In the Washington, D.C. area, calls to the major radio stations produced no information on the availability locally of recordings of old radio comedy shows. However, one station did suggest that I contact the Broadcast Pioneers Library (NAB Building, 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone: 202/223-0088). There, I discovered they are in the process of writing a book, as yet untitled, which will list the availability of transcriptions of comedy shows broadcast during the Golden Age of Radio. Attached as Appendix B is a list they provided, "Radio Program Sources on Recordings and Tapes." Appendix C is a list of additional sources for the purchase of records or tapes.

It is interesting to note that the Broadcast Pioneers Library has an Oral History Project which includes audiotapes, transcripts, and some videotapes of interviews with broadcast pioneers and various celebrities, including famous comedians.

Of the local record shops with recordings of oldtime radio shows, most have only a few records and, of these, some are collections of excerpts. (The more promising local outlets are included in Appendix C.) This is true of the Arlington and Fairfax libraries as well. It seems the greatest sources are found among private collectors. Some sell copies and advertise in such magazines as Hobbies--The Magazine for Collectors.

In Appendix D there is a listing of some of the books available about comedy during the Golden Age of Radio. With each listing, comments have been extracted to describe what is to be found in the book, and for some, I have added my own comments.

CONCLUSION

Teaching how to make a plant hanger or discussing oldtime radio humor are very limited examples of the learning experiences available from the community. Now, faced with budget restraints and the fact that transportation will be more difficult to obtain to take children out of the schools for visits of various kinds, more consideration should be given to inviting community members into the schools. It is true that some people will be reluctant or unable to participate, but most will feel flattered to be asked and will find a way to accept. Expertise shared freely and "for free" should not be overlooked!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barnouw, Erik. The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume II--1933-1953. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Firestone, Ross, ed. The Big Radio Comedy Program. Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1978.

Hausman, Jerome J., ed. Arts and the Schools. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980.

Heinz, Catharine, and Lynda M. Irvin. "The Broadcast Pioneers Library." Stechert Macmillan News, July-August 1979, pp. 109-112.

Rockefeller, Jr., David. Coming to our senses: The significance of the Arts for American education. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977.

Wertheim, Arthur Frank. Radio Comedy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

APPENDIX A

PLANT HANGER

Materials: 140 yd. pull-out skein of rug yarn (acrylic)
2 inch plastic or metal ring

Instructions:

Cut a strand of yarn 3 yds. long. Wind yarn closely around ring. Tie ends securely and cut off extra yarn.

Cut 36 strands of yarn, each 3½ yds. long. Insert strands in ring and draw ring to center point of strands. Cut an 18-inch length of yarn and wind tightly around all strands just below ring. Secure end.

Divide strands into 4 groups of 18 strands each. Now work with one group only as follows:

First Group: Leaving 9 inches free from top, make an overhand knot with all 18 strands. Divide strands into 3 groups of 6 strands each and braid tightly for 4 inches. Make an overhand knot, just below braid, with all 18 strands. Leaving next 8 inches free, make an overhand knot with all 18 strands.

Second, Third, and Fourth Groups: Work same as First Group.

With 9 strands of first group and 9 strands of second group, make an overhand knot 7 inches below last knots. With remaining 9 strands of second group and 9 strands of third group, make an overhand knot in line with last knot made. Join all groups in same way.

Leaving 6 inches free, make an overhand knot with all 72 strands. Trim 7 inch ends evenly.

APPENDIX B

BROADCAST PIONEERS LIBRARY

NAB BUILDING • 1771 N STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 • PHONE 223-0088 CATHARINE HEINZ, DIRECTOR

RADIO PROGRAM SOURCES ON RECORDINGS AND TAPES
Not for Broadcast: A Tentative Listing

Jackson, Paul T. COLLECTORS' CONTACT GUIDE, 1975. 1506 West Barker, Peoria, Illinois 61606. Recorded Sound Research, 1975. 58p. $4.00.
This directory, Record Collectors' SOURCE BOOK No. 3, lists subject interests of dealers, collectors, tape rental companies, special products, services, societies/associations. Includes a bibliography of directories, handbooks and guides, basic recording lists, and magazines. *For the most part, organizations listed in directory above are not listed below.*

Collectors/Dealers

Marvin R. Bensman
Department of Speech and Drama
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee 38811
Tape exchange of old radio programs in cooperation with BEA History Committee and SCA; computerized catalog.

Michael Biel
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky 40351
Discographer, collector.

Cassette Information Services
Box 17727, Foy Station
Los Angeles, California 90057
Publishes catalog, DIRECTORY OF SPOKEN-VOICE CASSETTES.

Lou Dumont
81 Kendall Road
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
Collector. For names of other collectors, see his column in Hobbies Magazine.

* Golden Age Radio
P.O. Box 25215
Portland, Oregon 97225
Catalog cassette listing also available.

* The Great Radio Shows, Incorporated
P.O. Box 254
Woodinville, Washington 98072
Catalog of old-time radio programs.

Heritage Recording Service
340 Parker Street
Newton Center, Massachusetts 02159
Contact: Thomas Heathwood
Catalog listing several hundred shows. Specialty: historic and documentary programs. Some electrical transcriptions available for sale/trade.

Indiana Recording Club
1729 East 77th Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240
Contact: Bill Davies, Secretary
Hobby club. Library tapes available to club members.

Mar-Bren Sound Limited
P.O. Box 4099
Rochester, New York 14610
Contact: Howard S. Brenner
Publishes catalog.

Mark 56 Records
P.O. Box 1
Anaheim, California 92805

* Best sources.

Collectors/Dealers (continued)

Mr. Stanley H. Moger
SFM Media Services Corporation
6 East 43rd Street
New York, New York 10017
Private collector of old radio shows.

National Radio Trader
Box 1147
Mount Vernon, Washington 98273
Contact: Phil Cole
Publishes a newsletter.

North American Radio Archives, Limited
3051 South Jessica
Tucson, Arizona 85730
Contact: Al Inkster

Old Radio Shows
422 North Ninth Street
Allentown, Pennsylvania 18102
Contact: Joe Hehn
Long-time collector of old radio shows.

Don Pellow
P.O. Box 751
Evansville, Indiana 47705
Catalog, ECHOES OF THE PAST.
Private collector; exchanges with other collectors.

Radio Yesteryear
Box C
Sandy Hook, Connecticut 06482
Contact: Dave Goldin
Collector for many years; catalogs: RADIO YESTERYEAR, which sells tapes, and RADIOLA, which sells LP records.

Vintage Radio Archive
J. Fred MacDonald
Institute for Popular Culture Studies
Northeastern University
Bryn Mawr at St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60625
(312) 583-4050

Roger C. Paulson
"Archives of the Airwaves"
P.O. Box 4
Needham, Massachusetts 02192
Collector/Researcher

Allied Museums and Institutions

Association for Recorded Sound Collections
c/o Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives
Lincoln Center
111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, New York 10023
Publishes journal; published PRELIMINARY DIRECTORY OF RECORDED SOUND COLLECTIONS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA.

Broadcast Pioneers Library
1771 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-0088
Catharine Heinz, Director
Holdings of program recordings and tapes are small; referral center to other sources.

Wichita State University
Box 31
Wichita, Kansas 67208
Contact: Dr. Frank J. Chorba
Director - Radio/TV/Film

Library of Congress
Recorded Sound Section, Music Division
10 First Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20540
Contact: James Smart
(202)426-5509

John Tefteller
SPERDVAC Archives Librarian
P.O. Box 1587
Hollywood, California 90028
Non-profit society which transfers ETs of radio programs to tape; tapes of holding available on rental basis by mail with certain restrictions to protect copyright.

Allied Museums and Institutions (continued)

The Museum of Broadcasting
1 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022
(212) MU-7-1150

National Archives
Motion Picture and Sound
Recording Branch
8th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20408
Contact: Leslie Waffen
(202) 523-3208/3209
Contains thousands of recordings and tapes, including broadcast materials.

National Audiovisual Center
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20409
(301) 763-7420

National Broadcasters Hall of Fame
West Main Street
Freehold, New Jersey 07728
Contact: Arthur Schreiber
(201) 431-4656

Milo Ryan Phonoarchive
School of Communications
University of Washington 98195
Contact: Donald G. Godfrey, Curator
Partial contents of this archive appear in Milo Ryan's HISTORY IN SOUND (University of Washington Press, 1963. 617p.) and Donald G. Godfrey's HISTORY IN SOUND: Part II (University of Washington Press, 1974. 145p.)

Division of Electricity and Nuclear Energy
Museum of Science and Technology
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
Contact: Elliot Sivowitch
(202) 381-4067

Society of American Vintage-Radio Enthusiasts (S.A.V.E.)
P.O. Box 377
Seymour, Connecticut 06483
Contact: Sal Trapani, President

State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Mass Communications History Center
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
Contact: Janice O'Connell, Assistant Director
(608) 262-9561
Reproduction of programs restricted in many cases.

Voice Library
c/o Library
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Contact: Maurice A. Crane, Director
(517) 355-5122
Dictionary catalog (published by G. K. Hall & Company, 1975).

WCSC Broadcast Museum
80 Alexander Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
Contact: Patsy M. Hicken
(803) 723-8371

Historical Sound Recordings
Yale University Library
New Haven, Connecticut 06520
(203) 436-1822
Listeners welcome by advance appointment.

APPENDIX C

RECORDS AND TAPES FOR SALE
OLDTIME RADIO COMEDY

Early Radio Tapes 8936 197 Street Edmonton Alberta, Canada T5R0Y3	($2.00 for catalog with supplements and newsletter on "Early Radio tapes on reel and cassette. Comedy, drama, big bands.")
Giant Music Center 9416 Main Street Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Telephone: 703/323-6900	(Records of oldtime radio comedy.)
Heritage-HBF 412 Redbud Oxford, Mississippi 38655	(Write for free catalog of "Fascinating Oldtime Radio shows on tape.")
OKAY P.O. Box 441 Whitestone, New York 11357 Telephone: 212/539-0419	(Sell radio transcriptions on reel-to-reel, 8-track, and cassette tapes.)
Out-of-Print Record Locator 6114 Gist Avenue Baltimore, Maryland 21215 Telephone: 301/358-3033	(Free catalog. Free National search.)
Radio Gems Box 668901 Charlotte, North Carolina 28208	("Old Time Radio programs on cassette tape: $4.00 per hour, postpaid. 15¢ /18¢ now/ stamps brings catalog. $4.00 a sample tape.")
Record Collections 101 King Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314 Telephone: 703/683-4583	(33-1/3 rpm records; tapes of oldtime radio, including comedy.)
Record Collections 8231 Woodmont Avenue Bethesda, Maryland 20014 Telephone: 301/652-5500, 7414	
The Redmond Nostalgia Company P.O. Box 82 Redmond, Washington 98052	($3.00 for supplement listing radio program recordings available on tape and LP records.)
Tran P.O. Box 1023 New York, New York 10009	(Write for free catalog of 12" LP records of broadcasts, jazz, personalities, sound tracks.)

APPENDIX D

BOOKS ON COMEDY DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

Barnouw, Erik. The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume II--1933-1953. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

This volume traces "the rise of the American networks during the years 1933-53." It examines "what was broadcast, by whom, and why," revealing "an extraordinary array of personalities--brilliant, arrogant, psychopathic, inspired, corrupt, dynamic, witty, relentless, tricky, ambitious" and exploring "their impact on our lives--on the web of human relationships, that are not as they were."

While comedy is not a dominant topic in the book, there are ample references to its dominant role in radio, leading comedians, studio audiences, influences on the film industry, and more.

- - -

Buxton, Frank, and Bill Owen. The Big Broadcast, 1920-1950. New York: Avon Books, 1973.

An expanded version of Radio's Golden Age, the first encyclopedia of old radio programs. It includes a special section on "Comedy and Comedians."

The alphabetical listings give, in regard to comedy, the name of the show, the type of show, the cast, vocalists, orchestra, announcer, writers, sound effects, catch-phrases, examples of classic routines, and sometimes a descriptive background of the stars or the show.

- - -

Campbell, Robert. The Golden Years of Broadcasting: A Celebration of the First 50 Years of Radio and TV on NBC. New York: A Rutledge Book, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.

Chapter 11 is devoted to "Weekly Comedy" and focuses primarily on TV situation comedies and, to a limited extent, on those radio sitcoms that made it into TV.

- - -

Dunning, John. Tune in Yesterday: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio, 1925-1976. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

This encyclopedia of "definitive facts you can't find anywhere else" lists each show alphabetically by title, giving all

the players of major roles, the sponsors, changes of cast, crew, writers, premiere dates, and shifts of format and network. It also details the early episodes, typical plotlines, development of the characters, openings and closings, and behind-the-scene glimpses of writers, stars, and studio executives. In addition, the books give the complete genesis and development of many radio classics as well as less well-known shows.

- - -

Firestone, Ross, ed. The Big Radio Comedy Program. Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1978.

"This book is a collection of the best scripts by the best performers at tne height of their radio popularity. Each script is preceded by a description of both the entertainer and his or her show."

Short of hearing a recording of the actual voices of the entertainers, the next best thing is reading the scripts (some are presented in their entirety). The book is notable for the stylized "way the words appear on the page to reflect the tempo, rhythm, inflection and timing of a performer's delivery."

- - -

Goldsmith, Alfred N., and Austin C. Lescarboura. This Thing Called Broadcasting. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930.

The subtitle: "A simple tale of an idea, an experiment, a mighty industry, a daily habit, and a basic influence in our modern civilization."

In chapter XVI, "Radio and Education," it is predicted that "The time will come when knowledge, if not the personality of the teacher, may be put into ideal form for presentation to millions via the air. Mayhap television will greatly help. When that time comes no man will be so poor as not to be able to afford an education. When that time comes, surely the world will be able truthfully to say, 'Here is an Enlightened People.'"

Chapter XXIV, "Radio Humor and Poetry," contains an excellent explanation of what humor is and radio's reknown for use of humor.

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Lichty, Lawrence W., and Malachi C. Topping. A Source Book on the History of Radio and Television. New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1975.

This book gives a general overview of the following areas of broadcasting: Technical, stations, networks, economics,

employment, programming, audiences, and regulation. It "serves not only to explicate the complex history of broadcasting but relates its development to other mass media. It will serve as a handbook on research techniques and sources [a bibliography of over 500 items is included], and as a guide to much that remains to be studied."

"Comedy," "comedians," and "humor" are not to be found in either the table of contents or the index; however, there is a very good piece about Jack Benny (pp. 333-337) which tells what made his humor unique and how each script was prepared.

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MacDonald, J. Fred. Don't Touch That Dial! Radio Programming in American Life from 1920 to 1960. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979.

This book provides a "history of radio programming and its role in shaping social values and thought in America. By merging an historic overview with a study of patterns in American life, the author allows us to view radio from anthropological, historical, and sociological perspectives in order to capture its monumental impact on American culture."

What happened to radio humor is explained on p. 145: "Broadcast comedy did not die in the late 1940s and 1950s. It simply ceased to be relevant to American society. With the advent of television and its success in post-war society, listeners became viewers, audio fell victim to video, and the function of radio humor was preempted by its televised competition."

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Rothafel, Samuel L., and Raymond Francis Yates. Broadcasting: Its New Day. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971 (Reprint Edition). (Copyright, 1925, by The Century Co., New York & London.)

This is a vintage book which describes and philosophizes on the vital issues of broadcasting and commercial radio, in the hopes of hastening the evolution of broadcasting to bring it "to a point of artistic development where it can take its place beside the motion-picture and the drama."

Chapter VII, "What Radio Can Do for Education," is of special interest as it dwells on the positive contributions radio can make to make education more available to the masses and to provide the dissemination of knowledge by highly qualified experts. Of course, 25-30 years later, the same things were said about television. Goldsmith's book of 1930 was equally optimistic.

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Settel, Irving. A Pictorial History of Radio. New York: The Citadel Press, 1960.

A vivid pictorial review of the progress, the stars, and the news makers of radio with separate chapters for "The Beginning" (starting with man's earliest achievements in communication), "The Twenties," "The Thirties," "The Forties," and "The Fifties."

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Summers, Harrison B., ed. A Thirty-Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States, 1926-1956. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971 (Reprint Edition). (Compiled under the supervision of Harrison B. Summers, Department of Speech, Ohio State University, January 1958.)

A year-by-year compilation of the programs carried on national radio networks from the season of 1926-27, the first season of formally organized networks, through that of 1955-56.

The information given for each program or program series includes: Program classifications (such as "Comedy Variety," "Comedy Drama," "Human Interest," etc.); programs falling within those classifications; sponsorship of the program; number of seasons on the air; network, program length, day, and hour; and the ratings showing the percentage of homes tuned to that particular program that week or during a typical week of that season.

Comparisons by year show the growth and/or reduction of interest in the different programs.

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Wertheim, Arthur Frank. Radio Comedy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

"The book describes the evolution of radio comedy from the fledgling years of the 1920's through the impact of television in the early 1950's. The volume stresses the relationship of radio comedy to American values and society during the Great Depression and World War II. . . . The book also examines the influences of vaudeville and other stage comedy on the comedians."

The author "primarily chose comedians who helped develop radio comedy artistically and humorists who had the most popular appeal to listeners. Other shows were selected because the broadcasts belonged to significant phases of radio comedy."

To read a chapter is to know a comedian or a writer as an individual--the road each took to success, the problems, the contributions each made to his or her art, the eccentricities, and the notable quotes.